

Comm - 021



January 29, 2010

Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Radiation Control
Room 212, Airport East Building (BLDG #2)
168 North 1950 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4850

To Whom It May Concern:

I am truly disappointed by the extent that the handling of Depleted Uranium has become a huge political debate. I have seen a lot of comments, facts and 'experts' presenting their views on both sides. I am afraid that the environmentalist groups are making a very large effort to prey on the general citizen's innate 'fear' of things that 'could' be dangerous. I think that they are pushing their own political and possibly personal agenda's by attacking and demonizing the process of handling and properly disposing of Depleted Uranium in the EnergySolutions Clive Facility in the West Desert.

I have lived in Utah for the past 17 years. My years before that were spent in Idaho. In Idaho I lived in different cities that have been very closely associated with the now known Idaho National Laboratory, whether municipally or through jobs created. The research and advancements accomplished by that facility have been incredible. The benefits of nuclear power in general have been innumerable, and have improved my life personally. I also remember learning about radioactivity and what it is and its benefits, as well as its hazards, as a young child in school. As an adult I have had many opportunities to work in and around radioactive materials.

I have a bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. Before I graduated, I began working in the environmental testing industry as a Laboratory Technician. My job was in a Third Party Environmental Laboratory that did certified analytical testing for different companies. I handled various types of material - soil, groundwater, even potentially contaminated protective equipment, etc. and performed analytical procedures and tests on them. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Division of Radiation Control (DRC) and/or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) each played some role in 'why' a customer had to have a material analyzed and verify or confirm that there was a deemed hazard involved with the material. My supervisors all the way up to the owner of the company took the time to help me understand the potential hazards of the things I would and did handle on a daily basis. I used the protective equipment and monitoring devices provided for my safety and I did my job ... Safely. And in doing so, I help provide customers with the information they needed, and often regulators also, to properly handle and manage potentially hazardous materials properly.

I currently have an opportunity to work for EnergySolutions at their Clive Facility. I work very hard everyday to do my job to the best of my abilities to help EnergySolutions handle low level radioactive waste materials safely and properly dispose of them in such a way that the material will be less of a hazard to the general populous. There are many regulations associated with this process. I feel very confident that EnergySolutions is

very vigilant in adhering to these regulations, as well as keeping me and everyone else safe in the process. I would not be working here if it wasn't important.

I feel that the recent proposal to adjust the rules and regulations for the handling of Depleted Uranium is completely unfounded and ridiculous. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory rules have addressed the potential hazards and provide appropriate expectations for the proper handling of Depleted Uranium. Uranium processing facilities, nuclear facilities and disposal facilities have been handling uranium in all forms with employee and community safety in mind for many years under these regulations, what has changed now? Uranium itself hasn't changed, the hazards associated with it haven't changed, the people handling it are still concerned about working with it safely, so what has changed to warrant changes to the rules and regulations.

I am afraid that the environmental group Heal Utah that is spurring these changes are doing it because they hope for some kind of political and maybe personal gain. They are ignoring the years of experience and science and playing on the fear of the general public that may not know enough about radioactive material to see through their unfounded claims. If you do not know a lot about radioactivity, it can seem very scary and dangerous based on the major catastrophes that have occurred in human history. It is however these same catastrophes that helped the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission establish the rules and regulations in the first place. Please do not allow them to prey on the general public's ignorance to suit their political or personal desires. I have great confidence in the great people that worked long and hard to establish the rules and continue to work to improve them when necessary. So since nothing has changed with Depleted Uranium itself, as far as I am aware, I feel that the Utah Radiation Control Board has no reason to listen to the unfounded urgings of Heal Utah.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patty Herndon', written over a horizontal line.

Patty Herndon
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